



EPISODE NO. 373

What Not Listening to My Body Has Cost Me

Albert Einstein said, "The intuitive mind is a sacred gift, and the reflective rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift." This episode is all about listening to the gift, and more specifically what not listening to this gift has cost me. So let's dive in.

Welcome to the School of Self-Image, where personal development meets style. Here's your hostess, Master Life Coach, Tonya Leigh.

Hello, beautiful friends. Welcome back to the podcast. And if this is your first time listening, hi, I'm so glad you're here. Today is going to be for my over-thinkers, for those who hardly ever check in with their bodies, for those who don't trust their intuition. I'm recording this episode for you. I'm going to share what not listening to my body has cost me and how I've learned to get back in touch with my intuition and the payoff of listening to your body, how it can lead to such a more fulfilling life.

This is something that I coach around and it's something that I've personally struggled with in my life, not listening to my own intuition, to that inner guidance. I tend to be very cognitive. I can be in my head. I can overthink things and I can override my gut with thoughts to help me do things that are not in true service of me.

And I was actually talking to a friend a few days ago because we were talking about intuition versus thought work and how they support each other, and sometimes how

they don't support each other. because what I've noticed in the past is that when I ignore my intuition, that gut feeling that says, "This is not for you. They are not for you. Don't go that way," when I ignore that, I can get my brain on board and I can justify it, right? I can come up with thoughts to help me buy into ignoring my intuition. But listen up you all. It never ever ends well, ever. Let me give you an example.

About four years ago. Now, don't hold me to that. It could have been seven, it could have been two, but let's just go with four. I decided that I was going to really focus on marketing, and it's not my favorite thing to do because I just love coaching. I just love working with my clients. But I knew that to reach my goals, I needed to learn how to market. And so someone had recommended this gentleman who is very renowned in the world of marketing, and I paid a lot of money to go and spend two days with him. And if I had to describe his style, very much bro marketing.

Now if you're in the online space, you know what I'm talking about. There's a funnel. There's upsells. There are down sells. There's all of these sells that happen. And I was sitting there listening to him, and first of all, I just wanted to leave. I'm like, "This is not how I roll. This isn't how I love to sell."

And so many of you have actually told me this, that you love how I sell because I think you probably love how I sell because that's how I love to be sold to. I love to be sold things that will make my life better. I love it. I think it's a beautiful thing, but I don't like that feeling of just feeling grabbiness like I just want to, if you can't get you here, I'm going to get you there. If I can't get you here, I'm going to get you there. And then just the whole psychology.

I just think showing up and sharing and helping and serving and offering value is the greatest way to sell anything. And that's how I roll. But I ignored my body. My body literally was shutting down during our conversations and I would say something to him like, "I don't think this is going to work for me." And he was like, "Oh, no, no, no, no. It works for everyone." And the whole time my body is like, "Tonya, what are you doing? This just isn't your style. This isn't how you do things." But I had made a commitment that I was going to try it.

And so I came back from that weekend and I did a webinar with his format 'cause he had a very laid out framework of here's how you do a webinar and here's what happens on the back end. And so I followed his formula. The whole time my body was screaming at me like, "We are off track, sister. What are we doing?" And then I just did his whole system and it felt miserable. It was not good.

Now, some people could say it felt miserable because energetically I wasn't behind it. And that's 100% true. But energetically, it's very difficult to get behind something that your soul is not in alignment with. We have to override what makes us ourselves, what makes us unique, what makes us who we are. We have to override that. And so that is one example of how overriding and not listening to my body has cost me.

With that particular example, I remember us receiving complaints, and I remember thinking to myself, "Yeah, I get it. I'm over here complaining about myself for having done that. So I totally understand why it felt off for you. It's feeling off for me too." I wanted to write myself a complaint email for what I had done to myself by not listening.

But then there is this part of me where I'm like, "Okay, I'm willing to experiment. I'm willing to get it wrong. I'm willing to try new things, but now I'm not willing to override that gut knowing."

Now, there's a difference in intuition and fear, a big difference. Intuition is nudging you towards your path. Intuition is often just this little nagging feeling, this little deep knowing. But sometimes if you ignore it long enough, it'll get louder and louder and it will get your attention. Whereas fear is like this panic that's coming from thoughts, coming from, "This won't work for you. You're going to fail. People are going to judge you." That's the stuff that we can clean up.

And the way I was describing this with a friend I was talking to a few days ago about it is the way I'm working now and the way I've been practicing is listening to my body first, not my brain. Noticing the places that light me up, noticing the people that I'm drawn to, noticing the places that I'm being led to, just noticing the ideas that come up, that feel exciting and true to me in my body.

And likewise paying attention to the people that just evoke anxiety in me, or noticing the places like Vegas that just don't feel like home. Noticing the ideas that instantly my body is like, "Nope, this is not for you."

And once I've listened to that, once I've decided this is where I want to go, this is what I want to do, it feels aligned, it feels good, then I use my mind to get me on board with my intuition. Because often what happens to you all is that your intuition is going to go against a lot of what society says.

So for example, another way not listening to my body has cost me is by smiling and pretending to be nice when I wanted to run away. Y'all heard it. Y'all know I'm talking

to some of y'all. But I was trained as a very young girl to be nice and to be polite and to smile and to not cause a ruckus.

And so now the work is whenever I need to speak up, whenever I need to leave, oftentimes that intuitive knowing brings up a lot of fear because I'm going against the grain. I'm going against the grain of my own self-image, but I'm also going against the grain of society. And so then I have to work through all the thoughts that come up of you being rude and these people are going to reject you and whatever else comes up. That's when I get to do all of the thought work. But the first step is listening to your body.

The way I describe it in the membership when I'm talking to members, I'm like, "It's like us playing hot and cold when we were kids," that game where someone would hide something and we set off to find it. And when we're moving further away, the people in the room are screaming, "You're getting cold, cold. You are freezing," and you know you're off track. And so then you start moving in a different direction and they're like, "Oh, you're getting warmer. You're getting warmer. Oh my God, you're hot, hot, you're on fire," That's what it feels like to listen to your body.

And there is a lot of unknown because you're like, "Where are you leading me? Where are we going here?" But what I do believe is that your body is the GPS system of your life, but in the moment, you may not understand it. And because you don't understand in the moment, you may want to ignore it and reject it.

A great example is just a few days ago, four days ago, I was actually flying to Miami and it was the day we were leaving and we were having some weather, but flights were leaving and they hadn't canceled our flight. But my gut was telling me, "Tonya, you need to change this flight." Now, it didn't make any sense 'cause I went online, flight on schedule, and flights are leaving. So it didn't make sense. But I've been practicing this more and more and more, and I'm telling you all, it rarely, rarely leads me astray.

And so I just called up my assistant and I'm like, "We need to change this flight. You need to change it to tomorrow. I just don't want to leave today. Something's telling me don't need to get on this plane." And so as it turns out, that flight was delayed, I think like four or five hours. So I would've been at the airport just sitting around four or five hours, and it was already a late flight. So I just had this intuitive hit that I needed to change it, just this hunch of changing the flight.

And I don't argue with that voice within myself as much as I used to because I believe that voice is there to guide us, to protect us, to support us. There's a wisdom within

our bodies that's buried so deep, but it speaks to us through our intuition. And that intuition is experienced in our bodies as a feeling. That's why they call it a gut feeling. It's just that gut knowing.

Have you ever been around someone and you just know this person is not for me? They can be saying all of the right things. They can be smiling in your face. On paper, they can look like the perfect person for you, but your gut is saying, "Run." Do you run or do you smile and play nice and stick around?

I know for me, just because of my social conditioning, I would smile, stick around, and play nice because I didn't want to hurt people's feelings. I didn't want people to think rude thoughts about me. And so I just sucked it up. I got my thoughts on board with going against my intuition. But if you watch that play out, eventually you discover, oh wait, that person really wasn't the person for me. It doesn't make them wrong. Doesn't make you right. Just not a match.

Not listening to my body, ignoring my body, overriding my body I have stayed in relationships too long. My last relationship, and this is nothing against him, nothing against him at all, but my body, certain things would happen and my body would just speak to me with these deep gut feelings and I would just do some thought work and I would find contentment. I would find happiness. I'd find joy in my day. I always say, I can bloom wherever you plant me. But the whole time my body was saying, "Okay, it's time, it's time." And I just ignored it.

What that cost me, I learned so much. So I'm not beating myself up, but I do feel like it cost me moving on to the next chapter of my life much more quickly. But then again, I look back and I realized that everything has happened the way it was supposed to. And even me going and working with that marketing person and spending a lot of money and felling and getting it wrong, I'm so grateful for that experience, right? Because I learned, listen to your body. I learned don't do something that doesn't feel aligned with you. And so I needed that experience to teach me just like in this relationship.

But if we want to break it down, we could say it cost me some years that I could have been moving on in the direction that my body was trying to lead me, but I didn't. I just ignored it and didn't trust it and thought, "You know what? I'm just going to stay here. I'm going to suck it up. I'm going to stay."

And that's what I did until one day the intuition was so loud, some things had happened and my gut was just like, "Girl, you've got to go." And I had a friend that supported me through that. I'm just like, "What are you doing? You got to go." And so I

was like, "Okay." I made the decision. I decided based on what my intuition was saying, and then I had to get my thoughts on board with the decision that I had made.

But the first step is you have to begin to pay attention to your body. And for a lot of us, we're so in our heads, that we don't ever listen to our bodies. We ignore them. I even think about what not listening to my physical body has cost me, not eating when my body is like, "You're hungry," or eating too much when my body is saying, "You're full," or not getting up and moving when my body is like, "Girl, we've been sitting here for a bit. I need to stretch." And just ignoring that. That has cost me so much.

Number one, it's cost me years of not being friends with my body. I think that's the biggest cost. All those years of just hating and resisting and being mean to my body. The one thing that's carrying me through this life, that is for sure the biggest cost. But then it's the physical cost of hip pain and all of the issues that have come from yo-yo dieting, and thank goodness I've worked through all of that, and I'm on the other side of it and I've learned so much. And I think that's why I'm able to coach on it at such a deep level is because I get it. But not listening to my physical body also caused me to disconnect from the feeling part of my body.

When you would ask me, "What do you feel?" I would go blank. I'm like, "I don't know. Good. Bad. Okay." That was the extent of it. I didn't have a big emotional vocabulary because I wasn't accustomed to really checking in with my body. And so when you're not in alignment with your body, you can't listen to it.

And so the first step to getting in touch with your intuition, it's getting in touch with your body. In fact, right now, check-in how do you feel? Now you can think about that in terms of physical, what's your physical state of being? But how do you feel emotionally right now? What's going on inside your body?

When I think about intuition, what comes up for me is it's that sort of just nagging feeling that you can sometimes get or it's a gut feeling, an instinctive sense about something. It's the wisdom of your subconscious speaking to you. And I like to think of it as this guiding voice, just whispering insight all of the time. Even if you don't have all the facts yet, even if it doesn't make sense, it's always whispering what direction you should go in. You have physical cues.

I like to think of it as the language of the body. It shows up sometimes for me through chills and goosebumps, or I often feel my intuition depending, because some intuition is guiding you towards what's expansive and what's exciting and what's your path. And I find that I feel that as this beautiful fluttery feeling in my chest. And then sometimes

it's leading you away from what is not for you. And I can feel that in my gut, deep, deep in my gut.

And so just even getting to know the different flavors of your intuition is such a powerful, powerful process. It's a beautiful journey because it brings you back home to you. And what I've discovered is that intuition, when you listen to it, when you listen to your body, it brings this inherent sense of certainty and inner calm when you align with it.

Now, you may have some fear that's coming from your mind about the dangers of doing that, but if you can transcend that for just a moment if you can get beyond it and just think about yourself following the commands of your intuition, you're going to feel empowered, you're going to feel, as I just said, this sense of certainty of this knowing and this calmness and inner peace that comes with that.

Intuition is your inner compass. It's connected to your spirit, to your true self, to your higher purpose. It's the wisdom that resides below your conscious, that thinking brain, and it's bubbling up to protect you, to guide you, and to nurture you. So learning to listen and decode your intuition is going to lead to a greater more fulfilling life. It's going to make decisions easier. Life will begin to have this flow to it. But if you ignore it, it's going to lead you astray from your truth and it's going to cause you a lot of suffering.

Your intuition is a gift if you will take the time to learn its language. It knows what is best for you, even when your logical mind does not. I've been doing a lot of work over the last year. I've mentioned this on previous podcasts, but last year was beautiful and hard all at once. And some of the questions that I was asking myself was, when were you most excited about your life?

And I gave some examples, I think on last week's podcast. It was like when I was reading, I was doing certain things. But I also realized it was when I was tuning out the noise. And back then there wasn't as much noise, right? Back when I first started my business, gosh, over 15 years ago there wasn't all of the noise around us like there is today. And so I just remember not having that noise and just going within all of the time, all of the time, listening to what my body was saying. I would get an idea and sometimes my body would be like, "Yes." And sometimes my body would be like, "Nope, that's not it."

But listening to that, I was so just excited about my life. And I think it's because I was following my inner compass in that North Star as Martha Beck calls it. And I feel like

over the years I have been moving towards that North Star, but I have not taken the straight route, which I think is normal.

Abraham talks about contrast. You get out of alignment so you can get back in. But I have gotten off the path over the years and always come back on, and the years that feel the hardest are the years that I've not been listening to that intuition, that I've been listening too much to outside noise, that I've been listening to the fear maybe. And learning how to get back to yourself and listening to your body is such a beautiful, exciting experience, and it can be very scary. And that's when thought work comes into the picture because your brain is going to have a lot of thoughts about following your inner compass because chances are it's never been there.

It's going into uncharted waters. It maybe goes against the grain. It may go against everything that your family has ever done or thought was possible. And so your brain is going to have a lot of opinions about you following and listening to your body. But the goal is to get your body and brain on board with each other, deciding, listening to that inner knowing, listening to your body, and then giving your brain the commands to get on board. "This is what we're doing. Here's what's up."

And this is something I coach a lot on within the membership. I've had women come to me and they'll say things like, "You know what? I've just been staying in this stressful job despite having this persistent nagging feeling that it's time to move on," or dismissing concerns or doubts about a partner's character or behaviors early in the relationship. How many of us have done that? Hello. Got my hand raised over here.

Sometimes it's pursuing a career path even though you feel it does not genuinely align with your interests, your soul, or your strengths. I've coached women before who went to law school because that's what they were told they should do. And the whole time they were in law school, they knew it wasn't a good fit. So they get out, they start their law career, and then they get 10, 15 years into it and they're miserable. And the only reason is that they didn't listen to their bodies. They got off the path a little bit, but I explained to them like, "Hey, that's part of the process. Let's get you back on path. Let's figure out where you're being drawn, where you want to move towards, and then let's get your brain on board with this decision."

I've coached women around making major life decisions such as buying a home, even though there's something deep within them that says, "This isn't the home for me." Now, if they can get coaching around this ahead of time, it can save them a lot because I've coached women on the other end of it who made the decision, they bought the

home or they made that big decision, and now they're like, "Ugh, I didn't listen. I didn't listen to my body."

I almost did this. I was in Denver and I put an offer in on a house, and the whole time it didn't feel great in my body. There was this just sort of sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. Now, I had to sit with that for a bit and ask myself, "Is that just fear? What's going on here? Or is this that it isn't the house for me?" And that's something that we have to really sit with and get to know ourselves.

And the way I experience intuition versus fear is very different. Intuition usually isn't panicked. It's just this very calm, gentle, subtle voice in your mind or your belly. It's this just soft sense of knowing and it brings a calm sense of just inner certainty. Whereas fear often is very loud and racing and panic thoughts and a very charged emotional response, and it creates a lot of uncertainty and doubt.

And then with intuition, it often can just center you in the present moment helping you see what you need right now. It connects you to a sense of your higher truth that guides you, whereas fear keeps you in this fight or flight mode focused on the future, and it spins you out in these outrageous what-if scenarios, and it keeps you stuck focusing inwards on negative thoughts, not looking at the bigger picture. So intuition for me, it's just very soft and gentle, whereas fear is very loud and scary. That's how I can tell the difference between the two.

Another great example with housing is when I was moving to Denver and I went to this penthouse, I was shown the penthouse. And my intuition was just, yes, it felt so good. But then I had a lot of fear come up around that intuitive hit that I had. So I had to work through the fear so that I could honor my intuition. And that's often how it works.

So I want you all to think about where you're not listening to your body or your intuition, however, you want to frame it. Are you staying silent in uncomfortable situations instead of speaking up despite feeling that you should say something? Are you spending beyond your budget on wants rather than needs because you ignored that inner warning sign about overspending?

What about pursuing intensive diets and exercise programs that leave you depleted even when your body is signaling to you, "Hey, it's too much. I don't like this. Let's take a more gentle approach."

Now, sometimes your intuition is going to say, "Girl, go harder. You can do this. You're strong." So it's not this formula, right? I wish I could give you a formula. There is no formula. The practice is learning to listen to your body to understand, and often what's required is that you start to tune out the outside noise, start asking yourself, "What do I want here? What is best for me?"

When you start tuning into the outside world, it often guides you away from your intuition, and that has been my case 99% of the time. And it's why I love good coaching because good coaching will never ever tell you what to do because I don't know what you should do. What I want to support you in is you finding out from yourself what you know you want to do. I don't know if you should stay or go. I don't know if you should start the business or not. I don't know if you should move to that new city or stay where you are, or if you should sell your house or keep it. I don't know that for you. But what I do know is that you know. And that answer is found within your body, not your mind, but within your body. And the work is figuring out what that answer is for you, and then using your mind to help you follow through on the commands of your intuition.

By the way, if you want to dive deeper into this work and immerse yourself in learning how to listen to yourself, learning how to see yourself as a deeply intuitive woman, if you want coaching and support around this, the doors to the School of Self-Image are open right now, but they're closing really soon. We would love, love, love to have you inside. You can go to schoolofselfimage.com/join.

I would love to leave you with some questions that I love to ask, not only of my clients but also of myself when I am tapping into my intuition. One is, do I really want to do this? This one often can clear things up. Do I really want to go to the party? Do I really want to go on this date? Do I really want to make the phone call?

Now, we're not speaking to the mind. We're not speaking to the fear. We're speaking to the body. And to follow up with that, I always love to ask if things worked out, would I really want to do this? Those two questions can often clear a lot of things up.

Another one is, will I regret not doing this? Now, remember, go to your body. And what I love to do is I love to picture in my mind not doing something and hold that picture and then visit my body to see how my body reacts to a future where I didn't do the thing.

When people are in a lot of scarcity around money, what I love to ask is, would you do this if you had \$10 million sitting in the bank? Oftentimes, we are ignoring our

intuition because we're in such a big state of scarcity. But what's ironic is that I have found over and over in my life and in client's lives ignoring that intuition because intuition is abundant. It's trying to guide you towards your most incredible life. And so ignoring that voice will often keep you in scarcity.

Here's another great question. If my highest self could speak, what would she say? And then imagine your wisest version of yourself advising you. What do I know deep down? Remove the outside opinions, the shoulds, what you see everybody else doing, and saying, and ask yourself, what do I know deep down? What little nagging voice has been speaking up that you may have ignored?

Another one is, if I were giving my best friend advice right now, what would it be? We often clearly can see solutions when we step back and not make it about us, and we'll find it in our bodies. When you ask yourself, when you think about someone you love dearly, and you think about them doing something or not doing something, notice how your body reacts. What outcome is in alignment with my values and my priorities? If I relax and breathe deeply what comes through the quiet?

Listening to your intuition requires space. It requires time to just be with yourself. And it doesn't mean you have to go off to a 10-day silent retreat, right? It's just carving out moments throughout your day just to check-in. It's paying attention when something feels not quite right or when something feels expansive and in alignment. It's just paying attention to the signs that your body is always giving you because remember that part of you is trying to guide you to your most extraordinary life. So listen up.

I hope you have a beautiful week of listening to that inner knowing and having the courage to follow it, and I hope I'll see you on next week's episode. Cheers.

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